

March 20th, 2012

Subcommittee Ranking Member Sam Farr

As prepared for delivery:

"Thank you Chairman Kingston.

"I would like to recognize:

Mr. Michael Scuse, Acting Under Secretary, Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services,
Department of Agriculture

Mr. Bruce Nelson, Administrator, Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture

Ms. Suzanne E. Heinen, Acting Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, Department of
Agriculture

Mr. William Murphy, Administrator, Risk Management Agency, Department of Agriculture; Mr.
Michael Young, Budget Officer, Department of Agriculture.

"Thank you for being here today, and for your tireless work—and that of your staff—to assist our
farmers in reaching foreign markets and for your critical work to help feed millions of famished
people all over the world.

"As our nation and the world continue to face economic uncertainty and international upheaval, the Agriculture Department's Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services is playing critical roles in assisting our farmers through the economic turmoil, and helping our international partners meet the dire issue of hunger.

"In both of these areas, this agency is providing key assistance and fundamental resources that are at the core of the future success of our national economy and our national security.

"Yet despite the clear importance of their efforts, funding for programs under the Foreign Agricultural Services have to easily drawn strong calls for cuts.

"Without fully understanding their value, these programs have also been criticized and targeted for political gains.

"As a Return Peace Corps Volunteer, I have seen firsthand what the power of friendship and a helping hand can do to uplift entire communities.

"Foreign food assistance programs have the capability to show the world an inspiring and uplifting side of America.

"They also have the added benefit of being cost effective diplomatic tools that work to build good will and reduce the poverty factors that help breed extremism.

"Our nation needs a new guiding principle to drive our foreign policy, one that includes long term strategies for stability and security.

"It is clear that foreign food assistance will not solve all of our international problems, but neither will pure military force.

"As we work to meet our obligation to get our fiscal house in order, we must weigh the long term benefits that foreign food assistance programs provide and the capability they have to prevent future costly military interventions.

"In many cases, these food programs serve as the face of the United States in foreign countries and subsequently they help set long lasting views of our country.

"With that in mind, I look forward to an honest discussion on how we can improve efficiencies that reduce costs and increase the positive impacts on the ground.

"Thank you, and I look forward to your testimony."

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